

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (currently amended) An interlabial pad with a size, weight, and flexibility capable of being held between labia by a part or the whole portion of the interlabial pad naturally therebetween, having a first axis that is substantially parallel to an anteroposterior axis of a wearer, and a second axis which is included in a horizontal plane when the wearer is standing and perpendicular to the first axis, comprising:

an absorbent body for absorbing body fluid, the absorbent body having a shape selected from the group consisting of elliptical-planar shapes, gourd-planar shapes and tear drop-planar shapes, the absorbent body having ~~one or~~ a plurality of bending elements each including a slit formed on a surface of the absorbent body, the bending elements each being provided in a prescribed position of the absorbent body with a lower bending strength compared to positions other than the prescribed position;

a plurality of first bending element pieces, each first bending element piece extending for a first prescribed length in a direction that is substantially parallel with the first axis, and the plurality of first bending element pieces including:

i) first bending element pieces having the slit positioned along the center line of the absorbent body in parallel with the first axis,

(ii) first bending element pieces having the slit arranged to reach a first peripheral edge of the absorbent body, and

(iii) first bending element pieces having the slit positioned between the center line of the absorbent body and a second the first peripheral edge of the absorbent body; [[and]]

a plurality of second bending element pieces, each second bending element piece extending for a second prescribed length that is substantially parallel with the second axis, and the plurality of second bending element pieces including:

i) second bending element pieces having the slit positioned to cross the center line of the absorbent body,

(ii) second bending element pieces having the slit arranged to reach the [[a]] second peripheral edge of the absorbent body, and

(iii) second bending element pieces having the slit positioned between the center line of the absorbent body and the second peripheral edge of the absorbent body;[[, wherein]] and

a covering material having a body side face facing a body side and an opposite side face facing away from the body side, the covering material enclosing [[encloses]] the absorbent body while maintaining and maintains an effect of the bending elements, the covering material defining a main form of the interlabial pad, wherein a surface of the covering material is not provided with slits, [[and]]

wherein ones of the bending elements are each each of a plurality of first crossover points is formed from one of the plurality of first bending element pieces having the slit positioned along the center line and one of the plurality of second bending element pieces positioned to cross the center line, and each of a plurality of second crossover points is formed from one of the plurality of first bending element pieces having the slit positioned between the center line and the second peripheral edge and one of the plurality of second bending element pieces having the slit positioned between the center line of the absorbent body and the second peripheral edge of the absorbent body, and

wherein the absorbent body is folded in two along the centerline being at the first crossover points to form a long protrusion part so that portions of the opposite side face are positioned to face each other and extension parts extend laterally from the long protrusion part at the second crossover points the slit in each of bending elements extending in both the one first element bending piece and the one second bending element piece, and a crossing point of the one first element bending piece and the one second element bending piece lies along the center line of the absorbent body.

2. (canceled).

3. (previously presented) The interlabial pad according to claim 1, wherein each slit has a length of 3 to 30 mm and a breadth no greater than 5 mm, and a distance between each parallel adjacent slit is 3 to 20 mm.

4. (canceled).

5. (previously presented) The interlabial pad according to claim 1, wherein: the ones of the plurality of bending elements that are formed from each of a first bending element piece and a second bending element piece are arranged in a line that is symmetrical with respect to the center line of the interlabial pad, which lies along the first axis of the interlabial pad.

6. -10. (canceled).

11. (previously presented) The interlabial pad according to claim 1, wherein ones of the bending elements include a third bending element piece in which the slit is extended, and wherein the third bending element piece is positioned near the center line of the absorbent body and extends in a direction towards the peripheral edges of the absorbent body from the second axis at a prescribed angle.

12. (canceled).

13. (previously presented) The interlabial pad according to claim 1, wherein each of the bending elements includes a low density portion.

14. (currently amended) The interlabial pad according to claim 1, wherein [[an]] the opposite side surface to a body of the interlabial pad comprises a mini sheet piece which is provided over one side part to another side part, wherein both side parts are substantially parallel to the first axis of the interlabial pad; and a finger insert hole is formed between the mini sheet piece and the opposite side surface to the body.

15. (previously presented) The interlabial pad according to claim 1, wherein the interlabial pad is a pad for an incontinence of urine.

16. (previously presented) The interlabial pad according to claim 1, wherein the interlabial pad is a pad for absorbing vaginal discharge.

17. (currently amended) A method of adjusting a form flexibility used for an interlabial pad with a size, weight, flexibility capable of being held between labia by a part or the whole portion of the interlabial pad being naturally inserted therebetween, the interlabial pad having a first axis that is substantially parallel to an anteroposterior axis of a wearer, and a second axis which is included in a horizontal plane when the wearer is standing and is perpendicular to the first axis, the interlabial pad comprising:

an absorbent body for absorbing body fluid and a coating material for enclosing said absorbent body, the absorbent body defining a main form of the interlabial pad; and a plurality of bending elements each including a slit formed on a surface of the absorbent body with a prescribed length and depth, the bending elements each being provided in a prescribed position of the absorbent body with a lower bending strength compared to positions of the absorbent body other than the prescribed position, in order to make the interlabial pad easy to bend into at least one of a U-shape along the first axis or an S-shape along the second axis,

wherein each of the plurality of bending elements is formed from a first bending element piece and a second bending element piece in which the slit is extended in both of the first bending element piece and the second bending element piece, wherein

the first bending element piece extends in a substantially parallel direction to the first axis,
the second bending element piece extends in a substantially parallel direction to the second axis, [[and]]

the fist bending element piece and the second bending element piece for at least one of the plurality of bending elements cross each other near a center line substantially parallel to the first axis of the interlabial pad, and

the fist bending element piece and the second bending element piece for at least another one of the plurality of bending elements cross each other between the center line and a peripheral edge of the absorbent body,

the method comprising the step of:

adjusting the form flexibility of the interlabial pad by a bending element application method using the plurality of bending elements.

18. (previously presented) The method of adjusting a form flexibility according to claim 17, wherein the adjustment method further comprises the step of changing one or more of the form, number, positioning area, and arrangement of one or more of the bending elements.

19. (previously presented) The interlabial pad according to claim 1, wherein the first bending element pieces having the slit positioned between the center line of the absorbent body and the first peripheral edge of the absorbent body are positioned at a boundary between an extension part of the interlabial pad and a long protrusion part of the interlabial pad.